CROSS ROADS

ne 27 August, 1951 Number 1

The Journal of The Rural Workers' Fellowship

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IN THIS ISSUE:

The Church and Rural Life
Rural Fellowship Awards
Some Remarks
Roanridge Homestead Project Report

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The Journal of the Rural Workers' Fellowship of the Episcopal Church. Formerly published as the Rural Messenger.

The Objectives of the Rural Workers' Fellowship

1. To promote the interest of the whole Church in developing an effective ministry to town and country areas.

2. To increase fellowship among rural workers and those interested in rural community life; and

3. To aid the National Council in its program and its service to rural workers.

CROSSROADS is published by the Rural Workers' Fellowship of the Episcopal Church, Inc., at 208 West Pecan Street, Coleman, Texas. (Subscription $2.00 per year, which includes membership in the Fellowship). Manuscripts, communications for the editor, books and pamphlets for review, and business correspondence should be addressed to the Rev. W. Shelby Walthall, 802 West Live Oak Street, Coleman, Texas.

Editor: The Rev. W. Shelby Walthall. Editorial Board: The Chairman of the Joint Commission on Rural Work (The Rt. Rev. Wm. W. Horstick); Dr. William V. Dennis; Mrs. Clifford Samuelson.

EDITORIAL

It is with a deep sense of humility that your present editor assum his duties. It is to be hoped that he can bring CROSS ROADS maga zine up to the high standards of journalism which have been main tained in the past. However, it will require the help and assistance o the members of R.W.F. Neither the editor nor the editorial board ca do it alone. Do let us hear from you. Tell us what you expect of thi magazine and we will do our best to fulfill our obligations to th readers.

It is with great regret that we learn of the death of one of ou faithful R.W.F. members. The Rev. Bert F. A. Ede died suddenly o the morning of July 4th. Bert has been a friend and ally of the tow and country church for many years. He labored faithfully and diligent ly in his Master's vineyard. He represented his diocese on many oc casions in the interest of the rural church. He served on variou committees at the annual meetings of the National Town and Countr Conference of the Episcopal Church. He will be sorely missed by a who knew him. The membership of the Rural Workers' Fellowshi extends its deepest sympathy to his widow and daughter who surviv him.

It is too early to get a complete report of the numerous rura conferences which have been held over the country during the summe We shall expect to have stories from those who attended them fo our next issue.

It was my pleasure in June to be elected and installed your ne president of the Rural Workers' Fellowship for this year. The annua meeting of the R.W.F. was held at Penn State College, State Colleg Pennsylvania, June 19th, with twenty members and two visitors bein present. The annual Corporate Communion service was held the da following with all registered members present. The meeting was hel in connection with the Rural Pastor's Conference. It was splendid tha we were able to participate in the courses at Penn State. They wer all of excellent calibre. It was gratifying to witness the healthy churc attitude the various professors had. Of course we all enjoyed the mai lecture by our own "Dad" Dennis, who has made such an outstandin

contribution to the rural church, and we were glad he could be with us for a special session of our own. We appreciated the kind hospitality of St. Andrew's Altar Guild, who provided us with a lovely tea and reception, and took care of our needs so well for our Corporate Communion service. It was very kind of the rector, the Rev. John Peabody, to offer us the facilities of his beautiful group of buildings, and we are appreciative of it.

The recent issue of the R.W.F. NEWS LETTER which has been sent you contains a complete report of the annual meeting.

With the Rogation Days not too many months behind us we felt that it was still rather timely to include in this issue of CROSS ROADS an article by the Rev. Arthur Freeman. It is a re-print of an article which appeared in the spring in "The Pacific Churchman," the journal of the Diocese of California. It is evident that Arthur has done a considerable amount of research on the subject and should command the attention of all Churchmen. Arthur is our genial representative in the Eighth Province.

Our faithful and gracious secretary-treasurer, Helen Philbrick has given us a concise report of the "doings" around the Homestead at Roanridge. The Philbricks are doing a splendid job of introducing homesteading to the Episcopal Church, a project they have been carrying on for many years. It would be well worth anyone's time to stop by Roanridge (a short drive from Kansas City, Missouri, at Parkville) and see what the Church is doing there. The entire staff would welcome a visit from you.

Also included in this issue is an address by the Rev. Henry Robbins delivered at the meeting of the Missouri Basin Inter-Agency Committee, Shenendoah, Iowa in June. We are happy to include it with this issue.

THE CHURCH AND RURAL LIFE

By The Rev. Arthur C. Freeman

The Rogation Days, the three days immediately preceding Ascension Day, have traditionally become associated with a concern for rural life; and in the Collect for those days we pray God "to give us a fruitful season." Originally, though, the days had no such connotation. In the year 452, a French Bishop, Mamertus, set aside these days as a time of fasting and supplication for cessation of the earthquakes, fires, and pestilence that had ravaged the diocese. The prayers were to take the form of litanies sung in procession. (As the Latin word for litany was rogatio, the name "Rogation" was given to the days). In 511, a Church Council decreed that such observances should be extended throughout the whole Church and work on these days was prohibited so that all might take part in the processions. The petitions in the litany were expanded from those for deliverance from earthquake, fire, and tempest to those for God's blessings on the crops about to be or just planted, and this has been the emphasis ever since. In England during the Middle Ages processions (called "perambulations") were held in which the people marched along the boundaries of the parish (this was called "the beating of the bounds"). At various places, marked by crosses, the people would stop to say or sing part of the Litany; also Psalms 103 and 104. After the Reformation, these processions became less frequent, but they are still held. And today, in some rural parishes in Canada and the United States, the congregation marches in procession, led by choir and minister out to the fields where prayers for an abundant harvest are offered.

As Christians, we pray for a good harvest; also, we interest ourselves in the people who will produce that harvest and their neighbors (the non-farm rural population which now rivals the farm population in numbers). As Episcopalians, particularly, we need to be reminded of this, because we usually think of ourselves as an urban church. Actually, in one sense we are not; for although the majority of our communicants are in cities, the majority of our churches are in small towns and villages.

There are definite values in rural life, values which the Church strives to keep alive and flourishing. Perhaps the chief is its stress on family life. In the country, the family is the basic social unit. Work,

play, and religion (if any) are family matters. The standing of a boy or girl, or a man or woman, depends to a large extent upon the standing of the entire family. A boy is not thought of as John Jones, but as William Jones' boy. Life is lived almost completely within the family. Not so in the city. There the unit is the individual, who works away from his family, and often plays away from it as well. The cynical statement, "Home is where you go when you can't go anywhere else," is often true.

Work is another such farm value. Idleness has long been recognized as the seed-bed of much evil. One of the problems of city parents is to find employment for children that will benefit and occupy both mind and hand. On the farm there is no such problem. And the Christian is not afraid of manual work.

Cooperation is another virtue. In a well-organized farm home each member has a particular task to do. Learning to cooperate here makes cooperation easier in larger spheres, whether it be the community, or the nation, or even the world.

Self-reliance may be considered another virtue. A farmer thinks and acts for himself. He finds himself in difficult situations calling for immediate decisions and he makes them, for usually there is no one else to do it.

Thrift is still another. The income of the average farmer makes thrift necessary. This may seem a strange statement today, especially in California—but, even in 1944, 38.9 per cent of all farms in the nation made less than a thousand dollars a year.

And we all know that there is a comradeship and friendliness in small places that is often lacking in the larger ones, though it does sometimes degenerate into "busybodyness."

Perhaps the greatest value of rural life is the reverence which it often produces. The writers of "Tobacco Road" and of "Stars Fell on Alabama" do not picture the thrill that comes with the consciousness of working with the Creator, but there are those who do feel it. The farmer never ceases to marvel at the miracle of growth. He plows the land, he sows the seeds, but he is ever conscious of his dependence upon climatic conditions, upon rain and sunshine, and conscious too of his dependence upon God.

"We plow the fields and scatter the good seed on the land, but it is

fed and watered by God's Almighty Hand."

Truly, in the words of Chaucer, "Nature is the vicar of the Lor Almighty." And this consciousness of our dependence upon God is o the very essence of religion.

And finally there are those who find peace in the quiet fields— like Elizabeth Browning, "The little cares that fretted me—the foolis fears of what might happen, I cast them all away . . . out in the field with God." For "The earth is the Lord's." And it is not difficult to se how much easier it is for the dweller in the country to recognize tha than it is for the city person.

All these values we have mentioned are highly prized by th Church — and any culture that puts them at a premium needs to b sedulously cultivated. The Church has not been recreant in its respo sibility. A share of the Woman's Auxiliary United Thank Offerin goes for "town and country" work. The Children's Lenten Mite Bo offering this year went to "Home Missions," much of which is fo rural work: to support trailer chapels which go to isolated places; t "Church School by Mail," to Indian Missions, like Good Shephe Mission in the Navajo country in Arizona; to deaconesses who wo in the Virginia mountains and elsewhere; to archdeacons whose "te ritory" is often hundreds of miles apart; to Roanridge, the 400-ac farm near Kansas City, which is used as a training ground for tho interested in serving in the "town and country" work.

And there is a continuing interest by the National Church. O division of its Home Department is "Town and Country," which co trols Roanridge Rural Training Foundation, where during the summ months as many as a hundred seminary students and women worke are trained and experimental work is carried on throughout the yea There are other training projects, too: in Lenox, Massachusetts; Va Crucis, North Carolina; College Station, Texas; and Fort Defianc Arizona.

Four hundred clergy and women workers are assisted every ye in the expense of attending conferences and doing graduate wor Conferences are held on a national scale, such as the one in Salt Lak City last year. Delegates are also sent to inter-denominational mee ings, either on the national or local level.

"Town and Country Work" is also aided by the Rural Worker

Fellowship, a voluntary organization of bishops, clergy, and laymen with a membership of near 500.

In all these things we have in our minds and hearts, as we pray on the Rogation Days, that God will "Bless the labors of the husbandmen, and grant such seasonal weather that we may gather in the fruits of the earth, and ever rejoice" in His goodness.

RURAL FELLOWSHIP AWARD

At the annual Corporate Communion Service of the Rural Worker's Fellowship held in June at St. Andrew's Church, State College, Pennsylvania, three outstanding leaders in the field of Town and Country Church were presented the Fellowship Award. It is a rare and sacred honor indeed to be selected for this Award. This year marks the third time such awards have been made. Appropriately engraved scrolls were presented to the recipients. The citations accompanying each award are given below for the three so honored: Miss Alice Sweet, The Rev. A. Rufus Morgan, and The Rev. W. Francis Allison.

MISS ALICE E. SWEET

As a woman worker she has devoted many years of untiring effort in ministering to town and country people. In both the Southern Mountain area where she developed a rural community center and guided people into a better life physically and spiritually; and in North Dakota where she has given extensive leadership in serving isolated families, she has proven to be a wise, able, and generous friend of rural people. A person who inspired many another woman worker to labor for Christ and His Church in rural areas, she is a worthy recipient of this award.

THE REV. ALBERT RUFUS MORGAN

For many years he has been a faithful friend and pastor to the rural mountain people, in a devoted and efficient ministry. His leadership to the Church's rural work in the Fourth Province has been an inspiration to many. He was the prime mover in founding and directing the Southern Rural Church Institute. As a priest who loves rural people and has labored long among them, he is a worthy recipient of this award.

THE REV. W. FRANCIS ALLISON

As an earnest and devoted priest of the Church, he has given richly of his time and talents to the extending of God's Kingdom among town and country people. Beloved by all, a teacher of many, a tireless worker for a constantly enlarged program of rural work on the national scene as well as in provincial, diocesan, and local areas, his influence has been felt for years in the Episcopal Church and among other religious groups and among secular organizations. He has devoted faithful years of excellent guidance to the Rural Workers' Fellowship, to various rural leadership schools, to students in field work and at the Philadelphia Divinity School, and to the field of journalism and visual aids. His devotion to his work, his capable and Christ-patterned life, his spiritual gifts, his deep insights into problems of the rural Church, make him a worthy recipient of this award.

SOME REMARKS
By The Rev. Henry B. Robbins

Governor Beardsley, Gentlemen:

For the last few hours you have been visiting in Shenandoah, visiting the farms, seeing what we have been doing here in the way of conservation of soil. It has been, I hope, a valuable experience for you. I hope that you understand what we are trying to do.

I would like to ask you to divest yourselves of your authoritative positions for a minute—take off your badges of authority and your badges of office—and allow me to talk to you as children of God and as citizens of a great nation.

By the Grace of God, you and I are here today, not because we have chosen to be, but for the fact that we were born here. Our forefathers came to this country searching for a land of opportunity, a land where they could be prosperous, a land where they could make an honest living. They came here under the guidance of God, feeling that they were responsible to God for things that they were to be given. They came and found a land truly of milk and honey. They came and found a land full of copper and brass, of iron. They came and found a nation great of wealth. They came and found the greatest nugget of all, the soil, in which we cultivate our crops. In this soil we

ave grown our grain. In this soil we have grown our grasses. In this oil we have fed our cattle, and because of that we are rich, a strong nd a prosperous nation. To lose this soil would be one of the greatest ns that we could possibly perform for the fact that we are destroying ne very basis of the prosperity upon which our country rests.

You and I live in an oasis. It is an oasis of plenty, surrounded by world of nations that are living in selfishness and greed because ney are starving. You and I live in a gluttonous oasis. I assure you at we have the greatest possibility and the greatest potential of any ation, but the basic strength of our nation comes from the fact that e have the top soil whereby we may grow our food, whereby we may ow strong and to use the other resources that we have.

Gentlemen, may I ask you now to place your authority back upon our shoulders.

You have read in your history books of the great nations of the st. You have read how they flourished and how they grew. They ere strong nations and powerful nations, but if you will look further your history books you will find that the history books are the only aces where they exist, because they are destroyed. You will find at the reason for the failure of these nations is because the leaders emselves failed to lead their people, failed to understand the probms of their nations, failed to keep abreast of the nations' needs, and function and to teach and to help them with their leadership.

You and I, if we live in this country, and live with understanding, d live with good leadership, I mean this for you Governor Beardsley, the other governors and the other men in authority, especially we re in the Missouri Valley—will find that we shall continue growing o a strong, a prosperous, a righteous, a just, a good nation, built th individual ingenuity. If we do not keep our responsibility as ders, then we will find that our nation, too, will go down into dust, t we will find ourselves destroyed, beaten and ruined.

May God help us to keep the Nation strong and healthy.

ROANRIDGE HOMESTEAD PROJECT

By Mrs. John Philbrick

As the summer draws to a close, we look over the season's work at the Roanridge Homestead. Before the rains began to fall in June we had already harvested and frozen twenty-nine pounds of green peas, twenty-four pounds of broccoli, thirty-one pounds of cauliflower and twenty-three pounds of green beans. At that point it began to rain and any kind of work in the garden was impossible, either harvesting or weeding.

Probably the most exciting addition to the Homestead this summer has been a swarm of bees which settled on the grape vine on Roanridge on June 30th. (A swarm of bees in June is worth a silver spoon). They now reside in the Homestead back yard where they make their headquarters while they work all over the countryside pollinating and collecting honey.

Students attending the National Town Country Church Institute training session were given a tour of the Homestead to give them some ideas of the way the rural clergyman can make use of the land surrounding his home.

There is still time to plant fall garden crops and we hope to have some spinach and lettuce growing in the garden over the winter.

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ANNUAL CONVOCATION ON THE CHURCH IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

The annual National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country will be held in Portland, Oregon, October 30-November 1951, under the auspices of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Clergy and lay people interested in the town and country church will attend. In addition to conference addresses by leaders in rural church and community life, commissions will meet daily to discuss specific aspects of rural life.

The Division of Town and Country of the National Council of the Episcopal Church has a limited fund for partial assistance in expenses for qualified persons. Application for such financial assistance should be made to the Division of Town and Country, 281 Fourth Avenue New York 10, N. Y.

We hope to present a full report of this meeting in the November issue of CROSS ROADS.

THE RURAL WORKERS' FELLOWSHIP OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, INC.

(Incorporated under the laws of the State of New York)

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You can do much to help advance the Church in Town and Country

Membership in the Rural Workers' Fellowship means more than merely receiving helpful literature from the organization. Whether you are a layman or woman, whether you are a clergyman or other Church worker, whether you live in country, town or city, membership in the R.W.F. identifies you as being a person vitally interested in serving God in town and country areas.

You help promote national and local fellowship of all persons interested in town and country Church work.

You help encourage the ministers working in this area of the Church's mission.

You aid in developing spiritual growth among the Fellowship.

You give the National Council, and its Division of Town and Country work, your support, advice, co-operation, and encourage them in their great task.

You assist your Diocesan program for the advancement of the Church in its town and country areas.

You enlarge the boundaries of your local parish into a new vision, growth, action, and fellowship of all those who are in your larger community.

You assist in the preaching of the Gospel of Christ to the town and country areas in this hemisphere.

JOIN THE R.W.F.

Send your membership fee to the Secretary-Treasurer:
Mrs. John Philbrick, Parkville, Missouri

Regular - $2.00 Contributing - $5.00
Sustaining - $10.00 Patron - $25.00

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Additional copies of this issue of CROSS ROADS may be had by addressing your request to the Editor.